

PART VI

LIVESTOCK, DAIRYING AND POULTRY

General Importance

The primary farming activity of Lewis County involves livestock and livestock products. In 1959, livestock and livestock products sold represented 81 percent of the total value of all farm products sold within the county. The 81 percent was composed of the following: poultry and poultry products sold, \$3,152,585 (32 percent); livestock and livestock products other than poultry and dairy, \$2,438,679 (25 percent); and dairy products, \$2,344,317 (24 percent). Also in 1959, dairy farms numbered 352; poultry, 286; and livestock farms other than poultry and dairy, 191. These farms made up over 36 percent of the total number of farms in Lewis County in 1959.

On the state level, Lewis ranked eleventh among the counties in sales value of livestock and/or livestock products including dairy products in 1959. The county's importance in the state's poultry industry is emphasized by the fact that it ranked fourth among the 39 counties that same year. Nationally, Lewis ranked eightieth among U. S. counties in number of chickens 4 months and older in 1959. Also in the same year, it ranked sixty-second in the number of eggs sold and seventy-seventh in the number of turkey hens kept for breeding for the nation.

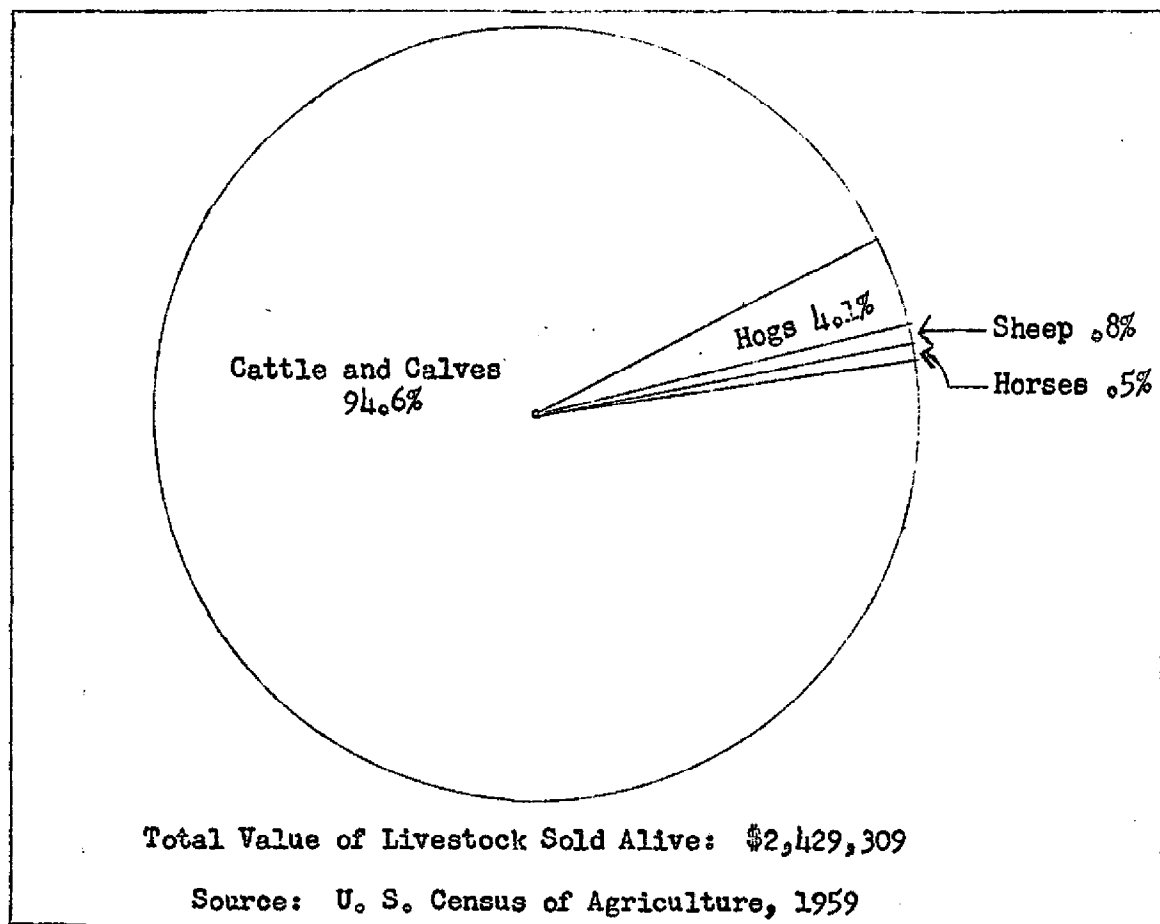


Figure 13. Value of Livestock Sold Alive
Lewis County, 1959

Livestock Trends

Significant changes have occurred in livestock farming since 1940 in Lewis County. The value of livestock and livestock products sold has gone up nearly four times from \$2,053,933 in 1940 to \$7,935,581 in 1959. The number of all cattle on farms has steadily been on the increase since 1951. This increase has been attributed to recent interest in raising of more beef cattle. Dairy cattle, on the other hand, have been on a downward trend along with hogs, horses and mules. Lewis County's dairy industry has tended to decline because of distance from the large urban fluid milk markets as well as the development of local interest in beef cattle. Turkey and sheep numbers reached a peak in 1954 and have declined since then, especially turkeys. Lewis's chicken numbers have been on an upward trend since 1949 and this has kept the county among the leaders in the Washington poultry industry.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

Cattle, including both dairy and beef animals, are the most valuable items in Lewis County agriculture. In terms of livestock sold alive, cattle and calves accounted for about 95 per cent of the value of sales in 1959. Cattle and calves also accounted for about 29 percent of the total 1959 sales of livestock and livestock products sold and 23 percent of the value of all farm products sold for the year. Since pioneer times, farmers have found cattle well suited for the local climate and topographic conditions and an effective way to use the woodland pasture, logged-over land and grass meadows of the valley clearings. In 1959, over 1,700 Lewis County farms raised cattle which were sold alive.

There has been a general increase in number of cattle since 1920. All cattle and calves numbered 25,156 in 1920 and reached an all-time high of 44,500 in 1962. Cattle numbers fluctuated during the 1920 to 1962 period with highs during World War II and the mid-1950's. Since 1957 there has been a steady annual increase in Lewis County cattle. Beef cattle herds have expanded and many new ones established by farmers and breeders. At the same time, dairy herds and milk cows numbers have been reduced. During high levels of employment from 1940 to 1950, many part-time farmers in the lumber industry abandoned dairying for beef raising because it required less labor. High prices for beef during the war also resulted in many new beef herds being established. Herefords and Angus have been the principal beef breeds in the county.

About two-thirds of Lewis County cattle are located in the western portion of the county. Both beef cattle and milk cows are found throughout the Chehalis-Cowlitz Prairies and also eastward up into the Big Bottom Country around Randle. Milk cows are little more concentrated in the areas around Centralia and Chehalis. Most cattle herds (over 90 percent) numbered under 50 head each in 1959.

Dairying has remained relatively important in Lewis County agriculture although the number of dairy cows has been on the decline since World War II. Also declining in the post-World War II period has been the number of dairy farms in the county. Dairy farms numbered 1,224 in 1945 in contrast to 352 in 1959. There were still more dairy farms in 1959, however, than any other farm type in Lewis County. Dairy farms are of many sizes but increasing costs in recent years have resulted in larger operations. Also, tremendous progress in milk production has been made. Despite the reduction in dairy cattle after World War II, the value of milk or cream sold remained comparable to 1945. In 1945, dairy products

sold were valued at \$2,485,907 as compared with \$2,344,317 in 1959. There has been a trend away from farm separation and selling of cream. Improved transportation by truck into milk producing areas enables whole milk to be delivered daily to Chehalis, Centralia, Winlock and Toledo for processing or distribution and there is less demand for butter. Lewis County's dairy industry is at some disadvantage as far as its location with respect to large fluid milk markets are concerned since distance-cost factors favor farms closer to the large metropolitan areas both to the north (Seattle-Tacoma) and south (Portland).

Table 28. Livestock Numbers on Farms
Lewis County, 1949-1962

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1949	31,700	5,900	25,800
1950	30,500	8,500	22,000
1951	30,000	8,900	21,100
1952	31,100	9,800	21,300
1953	34,700	14,100	20,600
1954	37,400	16,900	20,500
1955	38,800	18,300	20,500
1956	37,200	14,000	23,200
1957	32,500	10,900	21,600
1958	32,700	11,300	21,400
1959	33,700	12,900	20,800
1960	37,600	17,100	20,500
1961	41,500	19,700	21,800
1962	44,500	23,000	21,500

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Table 29. Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Lewis County, 1939-1959

Year	Any Milk or Cream Sold (dollars)	Whole Milk Sold (pounds)	Cream Sold (butterfat) (pounds)
1939	\$ 931,397	56,909,898	617,745
1944	2,485,907	83,420,998	144,332
1949	1,858,639	49,529,939	159,200
1954	1,784,011	50,234,203	113,472
1959	2,344,317	61,148,465	25,580

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Hogs

Hog raising in Lewis County is a sideline enterprise. In 1959, over 400 farms reported having hogs. The majority of the farms had less than 10 head. Hogs are raised as a sideline to use table waste and farm by-products and are slaughtered for home use. In earlier years, dairy farms kept numerous hogs which were fed skim milk.

Hog numbers have been on the decline but are still an important segment of the farm economy. In 1959, Lewis ranked fifteenth among Washington counties with 3,166 head of hogs. A total of 3,030 head were sold by 156 farms for nearly \$100,000 in 1959. Hog numbers have declined over threefold since 1920 when Lewis County had 10,310 hogs. One major factor causing the decline is the newer marketing practice of selling whole milk and consequent abandonment of cream separating on dairy farms which yielded skim milk for feed. At present, hogs are evenly distributed in the farm areas of the county.

Table 30. Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Lewis County, 1939-1959

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	5,201	2,332	4,380
1944	5,043	2,515	3,564
1949	3,991	2,503	2,114
1954	3,068	3,954	957
1959	3,166	3,489	936

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Sheep

In 1959, Lewis County ranked seventeenth in the state in sheep and lambs with 3,489 head. In 1930, sheep numbered 8,763 but the numbers have been on the decline ever since. The sheep industry has always been of a minor nature in Lewis County. In 1959, the value of sheep and lambs sold was less than 1 percent of the total value of livestock sold. About 76 farms sold 1,525 head for \$19,825 that year.

Lewis County is not ideal sheep country. Handicaps to sheep raising are the long wet season, heavy snows in the mountains, heavily forested terrain, numerous predators and high costs of wintering in sheds and barns. Most of the sheep are raised in the drier farmlands of western Lewis County near Chehalis, Centralia, Winlock and Toledo. High mountain ranges within the county are used for summer grazing by some of the large range sheep operators headquartered east of the Cascades.

Horses and Mules

Horses and mules used as work animals have decreased since 1920. Tractors, trucks and other mechanical devices have replaced draft horses on most farms and logging operations. Numbers have decreased steadily from 5,633 head in 1920 to only 936 head in 1959. Most of the present horses are used for pleasure riding and packing in the forested mountain areas of eastern Lewis County.

Poultry Farming

Lewis County has long been a major poultry industry area. With over 280 poultry specialty farms and over 570 farms which marketed poultry and eggs, it ranked fourth in the state for the value of poultry and poultry products sold, number of chickens sold and number of eggs sold in 1959. The value of the poultry and poultry products sold increased 6 percent since 1949, going from \$2,960,726 to \$3,152,585 in 1959.

From the standpoint of all farm products sold, poultry is the major item of Lewis County agriculture. In 1959, it accounted for 32 percent of the cash received for all farm products sold. The number of chickens in Lewis in 1959 was 489,782, an increase of about 88 percent from the low of 260,129 in 1949. The general trend in both chicken numbers and egg production during the decade between 1949 and 1959 was upward. Number of poultry farms, however, declined during the same period from 397 to 286.

The industry is generally located in the lowland prairie area and in numerous small farms on cut-over land lying between Chehalis and Toledo. An area of poultry farm concentration is found around Winlock.

The sale of eggs during 1959 totaled 6,108,363 dozen, nearly double the sales of a decade before. Over 480 farms sold 6,108,363 dozen eggs in 1959. This is in contrast to over 1,200 farms which sold 3,123,446 dozen eggs in 1949. Also in recent years, growers have been selling more broilers for the fresh and frozen market. In 1959, the output of broilers and fryers numbered 1,119,779 birds, more than 23 percent of the 1954 figure. Twenty-eight farms reported having sold broilers in 1959, while 358 farms sold other chickens numbering 260,406. All chickens sold totaled 1,380,185 in 1959.

Table 31. Chickens, Eggs and Turkeys
Lewis County, 1939-1959

Year	Chickens (birds) 1/	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	298,692	3,404,235	31,962
1944	331,970	3,528,048	45,143
1949	260,129	3,123,445 2/	80,221
1954	363,499	4,113,216 2/	113,278
1959	489,782	6,108,363 2/	41,400

1/ 4 months and over. 2/ Eggs sold.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Lewis County was the state's second most important turkey raising area in 1954. Turkeys and turkey fryers raised numbered 113,278 during that year. By 1959, however, the figure was reduced to 41,400 and the county dropped to sixth in state rank. Only 25 farms reported raising turkey in contrast to 85 in 1954. Most of the farms with turkeys have small flocks of 50 or less. In 1959, only 8 farms reported having 400 or more birds. The large-scale turkey farms at that time were located near Chehalis.

Table 32. Lewis County Agricultural Rankings Among
All United States Counties, 1959

Item	Rank
Chickens, 4 months old and over (number of birds)	80
Chicken eggs sold (dozens of eggs)	62
Chicken eggs sold (value in dollars)	65
Turkey hens kept for breeding (number of birds)	77
Strawberries harvested for sale (number of acres)	27
Strawberries harvested for sale (quantity) . .	27

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.